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Workers: Unite to Fight Immigrant Slave Labor

SMASH ALL BORDERS!

France: Multi-racial Action Backs Undocumented Strikers

PARIS, March 25 — Today a well-coordinated united, multi-racial action of militant trade unionists and undocumented immigrant strikers enabled the latter to occupy the former Galeries Lafayette warehouses here for six hours.

At 1 p.m. a "commando" team of 20 trade union activists walked quickly up the Rue Blanche. At the signal "Let's go!" they ran to the renovation site and quickly broke open the gate. Then 63 undocumented workers invaded the site under the stunned eyes of the construction workers inside. The latter then left as the 63 undocumented workers settled in.

At 7 p.m., the police, without any court order, evicted the occupiers. The 63 workers marched out, chanting slogans from the construction site to the subway station.

The aim of the action was two-fold. First, it united the undocumented strikers, who work in small groups for many different subcontractors, allowing them to form a "critical mass" and realize their strength when unified into a larger force.

Secondly, it aimed at putting pressure on Bouygues Construction — which is renovating the warehouses — and is one of the big companies that employs undocumented workers and is blocking the across-the-board "legalization" of all undocumented workers. Worldwide, Bouygues Construction employs 52,600 workers and netted over one-third of a billion dollars profit in 2008.

It also exposes the international and racist super-exploitation of the mostly North African undocumented workers since the U.S.-based Carlyle group owns the warehouses. (Former president George H.W. Bush is one of its principal directors.) Carlyle invests in buyouts, growth capital, real estate and leveraged finance on six continents. Since 1987, it has invested $59.6 billion of equity in 952 transactions for a total purchase price of approximately $233 billion.

While capitalist bosses set up national borders and use them to divide workers and super-exploit immigrants, they have no hesitation to cross these borders themselves in their drive for maximum profits. Still another reason for workers to unite worldwide to destroy this thieving system and replace it with one run by and for the working class — communism. ✪



Amiens, France, March 23, 2010 — The banner reads "Eliminate 16,000 jobs in the government," (among the ministers and top politicians). This refers to the elimination of 16,000 teaching jobs this year. See more, page 5.

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 21 — Over 250,000 working-class youth and families marched and rallied in support of the "Comprehensive Immigration Reform" (CIR) bill. The crowd was loud, spirited and hopeful, but at the same time wary. The Democratic Party, along with unions, churches and community groups, organized the event they called a "March for America." It was no surprise that the marchers, led by SEIU president Howard Stern, were prompted to wave the U.S. flag and chant, "USA, USA."

While the majority of the marchers echoed the bosses' chant, a group of PL'ers and friends interjected working-class internationalism with the chant, "Workers' Struggles have no Borders" and sold several hundred CHALLENGES.

Many immigrants want changes, because they know all too well how the long arm of capitalism — imperialism — decimated their home countries and forced many of them to trek dangerous routes to feed their families. PL'ers must expose how the proposed reforms fit into U.S. imperialism's needs.

U.S. rulers need a much larger military and civilian population that is patriotic, or at least passive, and willing to "sacrifice for America" because they face mounting challenges to their top-dog status from rivals in China, Europe, the Middle East and South America. Their solution to these problems is to make ALL workers pay to save their economy and finance their wider wars.

Obama has pledged his "support for immigration reform that provides for national prosperity, national security, and a population that plays by the rules and a path to citizenship." These "rules" mean immigrant workers will have to declare themselves criminals and pay fines and back taxes (from $10,000 to $20,000 per person). An ID system (E-verify) would intensify enforcement of fascist workplace rules, heighten armed military control of the U.S.-Mexico border and lay a path to citizenship that may take from 8 to 13 years.

CIR's promise of "legalization" will keep the bait sweet enough to continue to attract millions of workers into a temporary worker status under the watchful eyes of government agents. Immigrant workers are victims of racist super-exploitation, which impoverishes the whole working class. It creates a "reserve army of the unemployed" which the bosses use as a club over the heads of all workers, including white workers.

CIR will tie immigrant workers to their jobs: their temporary status would depend on maintaining employment. Get laid off — get deported. This policy would continue the U.S. history of slave labor under a liberal disguise. Then the only option for youth becomes joining the military to fight and die for U.S. imperialism.

Conveniently overlooked are two key elements of "reform": the Dream Act and a guest-worker program. These are not "details to be worked out," as the politicians and their lackeys proclaim. They're real-life issues that will result in more raids and deportations as workplace regulations tighten, with more racist profiling and criminalization of immigrants. This would soften all workers for even sharper attacks on labor standards.

It is important to emphasize international working-class unity, particularly at workplaces, in communities and among youth. PLP pledges to fight racist attacks against immigrants and refuse to hand over information about undocumented immigrants, while protecting them in any way possible. We pledge to link the pro-immigration fight to the one against racist unemployment. Activities to mobilize a successful May Day and build the revolutionary communist PLP are crucial. ✪

The $2.5 TRILLION Swindle: U.S. Rulers Plunder Workers' Social Security to Fund Wars

In one of the U.S. ruling class's biggest swindles in history on the backs of the working class, the rulers have plundered Social Security (SS) surpluses of $2.5 TRILLION and used the swag to finance every U.S. imperialist war from Vietnam to Afghanistan. Now they want to plunder it still more.

A recent NY Times front-page article (3/24) reported that for the first time in decades the annual money being paid out in Social Security (SS) checks will exceed the amount coming in from current SS payroll taxes. It said that continuation of this trend will cause the SS Trust Fund to go broke, on "a long, slow march to insolvency."

Already Alan Greenspan, "architect of the plan to rescue" SS 27 years ago, is saying, "When the level of the trust fund gets to zero, you have to cut benefits." (NYT, 3/24) Actually it was Greenspan's"rescue plan" that helped steal the $2.5 trillion from SS's surplus.

But this is not an "SS crisis." Rather it's a crisis of capitalism in which the rulers try to "solve" it at the workers' expense, both on the battlefield where working-class troops bear the brunt of the fighting and dying — while killing masses of other workers — and at home as the rulers steal from the workers to fund the killing abroad.

Johnson's Scam to Bail Out the Vietnam War's Budget Deficit

This huge robbery of workers' taxes began in 1968 when the U.S. imperialist invasion of Vietnam was in high gear. The Johnson administration's war expenditures were spinning the Federal budget into bottomless debt. Until then all SS payroll taxes were set aside by law into the SS Trust Fund, separate from the general government treasury, to pay benefits to future retirees.

By then the Trust Fund was running a surplus — its income from workers' payroll taxes was exceeding the amount paid out to retirees. So the Johnson gang figured out a shrewd trick to "balance the budget": "fold" the SS surplus into what would now be called the Unified Federal Budget. Never mind that it was "illegal" to spend Trust Fund monies for purposes other than Social Security. "By law, Social Security is excluded" from the budget; "in practice, it is included." ("The Federal Budget: Politics, Policy, Process"; Allen Schick, Brookings Institution, 1995) When it benefits the bosses, they always break their own laws.

This sleight-of-hand enabled Johnson to mask any deficit in federal spending generated by the enormous expenses of the Vietnam War. In "exchange" for stealing the SS surplus, the government would essentially give the Trust Fund paper "I-O-U's," notes equal to what it "loaned" from the Fund (plus interest). These notes became the "assets" of the Fund and laid the basis for what is now a $2.5 TRILLION debt owed to SS (NYT, 3/24). How it spiraled to that astronomical amount is still another story of the rich swindling the working class.

Greenspan-Reagan Plan to 'Save' the Baby Boomers' Pensions Depletes Them Instead

By the early 1980s, with the Reagan administration's military budget running wild, the federal deficit was skyrocketing. The Unified Federal Budget meant that any SS surplus — now part of this "Unified" Budget — could be used to pay for general operating expenses, "everything from jet fighters to thumb tacks" (NY Times, 1/21/1990). So Reagan's Greenspan Commission came up with the "solution" to save the Baby Boomer's future pensions: jack up workers' SS taxes.

The SS surplus began climbing sharply, recently running at $200 billion per year. "Since 1983, American workers have been paying more into Social Security than it has paid out in benefits….So what has happened to [those trillions]? The payments have all been spent." (NYT, 2/20/2004)

But, "If the proceeds of that tax [hike] were simply revenues for the ["Unified"] federal budget,…then the tax was nothing more than a way to increase the share of the burden borne by working people." ("Social Security's Future," NY Times, 1/31/1995)

And what is now $2.5 trillion stolen from the SS surpluses has been helping to pay for the "general operating expense" of every U.S. imperialist invasion since — from Grenada to Panama to Somalia to Yugoslavia to Gulf War I to Iraq to Haiti to Afghanistan/Pakistan.

Clinton Budget 'Surplus' A Mirage

These SS surpluses turned Clinton's federal budget deficit into a ballyhooed "surplus" of $70 billion. As the NY Times then editorialized (11/9/1998), "the Government's current budget surplus is a mirage. Last year's budget surplus — about which both the President and the Republicans crowed incessantly — was due to a big surplus in Social Security. The rest of the budget showed a deficit of almost $30 billion."

This highway robbery falls even more heavily on black and Latino workers. Because of centuries of inherited racist discrimination, their net worth (accumulated assets) was reported recently at one-tenth of the rest of the U.S. population. Therefore, they're even more heavily dependent on Social Security pensions to survive any retirement years.

And with all the racist attacks on undocumented immigrants as "stealing from the economy," the fact is that they pay SS taxes but get exactly zero SS pensions. They contribute hugely to a "Unified Federal Budget" which is then used to raid, jail and deport them while trying to cajole their youth into the military to fight and die in U.S. imperialist wars.

Actually, it was a communist-led, fiercely militant working-class movement that won Social Security for our class during the Great Depression. But it made the fatal error of not tying this fight to the one for revolution, enabling the ruling class to use its state power to whittle away and reverse hard-won gains. Today, as U.S. rulers, led by Obama, wage war abroad and destroy livelihoods at home, it's clear they're our class's main enemy.

The past and coming Social Security swindle is nothing new for U.S. rulers. The bosses rob us every day of our lives, exploiting us at work while laying us off for long periods of unemployment. There's only one way to end these horrors: building the PLP to a point where we can lead a workers' revolution for communism, a society run by the working class that, once and for all, would smash capitalism's exploitation, poverty, racism and wars for profit. ✪

War-bent Rulers' Retirement 'Reform': Work Till You Die

Obama's Afghan surge, costing $1 million per soldier per year, is gearing up for a major battle in Kandahar. Meanwhile, Social Security (SS) is starting to take in less than it pays out (see adjoining article). But according to the rulers' Peterson Institute, "Ironically this is a good thing for America. [!] These types of problems are never dealt with politically unless the president and Congress have to. Now they do."

This Institute boasts board members Standard Oil heir David Rockefeller, British Petroleum boss Tony Hayward, Chevron CEO David O'Reilly, GM chairman and Exxon Mobil director Ed Whitacre, and Saudi billionaire Hutham Olayan.

These direct beneficiaries of U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan seek anti-worker "comprehensive Social Security reform, including gradual increases in the retirement age and an alteration [downward] of the benefits formula" (Peterson director C. Fred Bergsten in "Foreign Affairs," November/December 2009). In essence, the cash-starved war-makers want workers either to die before they can collect from SS or to collect far less than they put in.

Obama Healthcare May Fall Short of Rulers' War Needs

The rulers hope Obama's new health plan will free up funds for their war machine but fear it won't. Max Boot, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, U.S. rulers' leading foreign policy think-tank, is worried "about the impact of ObamaCare on….'our' global power. The United States currently spends… [for] 'defense' $661 billion in fiscal year 2009….But that's a pittance compared to what we spend on…Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid….almost 35% of the budget, compared with 17% for 'defense.'" (Wall Street Journal, 3/25/10). Boot complains that this outlay saps U.S. rulers' power to kill enemies.

He warns his ruling-class masters that before they can wage the larger regional and global wars they need, they must first slash Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. "[I]f we are looking at major threats to our global standing, we should not look at China, Iran or Russia. We have met the enemy and he is us — specifically, our 'insatiable' demand for entitlement spending." Look out Social Security!

OUR FIGHT

✯**Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.**

✯**Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.**

✯**Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.**

✯**While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.**

✯**Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.**

✯**Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.**

✯**Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.**

✯**Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.**

✯**Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.**

✯**Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!**

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PL'ers Honor Fallen Haiti Comrade:

'You Can Kill A Revolutionary But You Can't Kill The Revolution!'

PORT-AU-PRINCE, MARCH 16 — As we gathered to mourn a fallen comrade in Haiti, Janil Louis-Juste, the famous cry of IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) "Wobbly" rebel Joe Hill, before the bosses executed him in 1915, came to mind. "Don't mourn; organize!" Janil was a leader of students and faculty at the State University of Haiti in their militant 2009 campaign against cuts and in support of the Haitian workers' struggle for a livable minimum wage.

Janil's death was a political assassination, probably on the orders of the UN "peacekeeping" mission, MINUSTAH. He was shot by two professional killers not far from his campus on January 12, just two hours before the earthquake struck. His OCHAN, or memorial service, March 12 in the courtyard of his ruined university was strong and beautiful.

We were summoned to attention by the solemn bass drone of the LAMBI, the conch-shell trumpet used by Haitian revolutionaries in 1791 to call the slaves to revolt. A ceremonial wood fire blazed under repeated libations of rum, candles flickered in a block of lava, and poetry, music, theatre and an amazing river of words flowed powerfully for over four hours.

In this blaze of speech, mourners became organizers. Some PLP comrades and friends had been invited to speak in a gesture of international solidarity. One of us, a professor who knew Janil, paid him a personal tribute as a fighting philosopher and internationalist. Another, a Stella D'oro striker (see CHALLENGE, 9/09-7/10) from the Caribbean, recalled a revolutionary friend from his student days also shot down by the police, and called for international class unity of all workers and students to fight back against repression.

A veteran Party leader ended by saying that when the conch-shell sounded for international communist revolution, we in PLP would be there to fight alongside our sisters and brothers in Haiti. A teacher in the audience told us afterwards that these words made him want to get out of his seat and march in the streets. (Students did hit the streets immediately after the assassination, some escaping death in collapsing buildings as a result.)

Of the speeches by students, peasants, organized and unorganized workers, intellectuals and artists, more than one echoed our communist sentiments. A student MC quoted Janil: "The struggle… knows no borders." His widow read a political essay, saying that as he had taught her the art of political writing this was her best tribute.

Janil's death was joined to the "many thousands gone" of the old U.S. slave song, our casualties and our heroes. The heroes of the working class, "who as workers have no country," as Marx wrote, come from all times and places and "races" and nations. The defiance with which revolutionaries greet the capitalist state that kills us broke through in call-and-response chants like: "Camarade Janil: Présent!" and "Liberty or Death!" (the slogan of Dessalines, the Haitian slave general who defeated a Napoleonic army in 1803).

A kind of revolutionary mass education took shape at the ceremony, following Janil's critique of bourgeois education: "Education is a trap where capital makes its pile." One of our speakers got the most applause for saying the state university served the state, not the working class, and only a communist revolution could create real workers' schools. Some discussed opening up "freedom schools" run by workers in place of schools closed by the earthquake.

As many said, the truest tribute is to carry on the struggle. And in the succeeding days we did so, in intense meetings with our sisters and brothers regrouping to organize in terrible circumstances. They asked us to help by putting pressure on the Haitian and U.S. governments and bosses to stop killing and jailing and firing students, faculty and workers who fight back. We agreed to raise resolutions in our unions and other organizations against this repression and to get the imperialist troops (both U.S. and UN) out of Haiti.

All PLP members and friends should bring such resolutions to their groups. They also need, rather than money or medicines and food, material political aid to help organize, such as video projectors and cameras, printers and laptops they can share, students and workers together. When you collect for this, think that you are defying Janil's killers, proving right one speaker's cry: "You can kill a revolutionary but you can't kill the revolution!" ✪

Workers + Students + Red Ideas Unite vs. Transit Bosses

NEW YORK CITY, March 4 — Over 3,000 transit workers and nearly a thousand students protested in front of an MTA (Metropolitan Transit Authority) hearing to oppose a wave of MTA's proposed racist cuts. The agency claims an $800 million budget deficit and is demanding student payments for metrocards, layoffs and a possible fare hike in 2011. It also appealed a legally-binding arbitration award for city bus and subway workers, denying raises for six months.

The MTA runs commuter rails through the mainly white suburbs but these cuts are concentrated in the city where transit workers, students and riders are overwhelmingly black, Latino and immigrant.

Capitalism is the source of these racist attacks against the working class, not greed or mismanagement. The MTA budget woes stem from billions paid to the bankers in "debt service," nearly one-fourth of the MTA's budget. The bosses' dictatorship guarantees that all these payments are legal requirements under New York State law. Legally, bondholders are paid before all other expenses and MTA agreements require that fares be sufficient "to cover all debt service" (mta.info).

But TWU (Transport Workers Union) Local 100 leaders blamed mainly Mayor Bloomberg for the cuts and promoted "good politicians" who want to use federal stimulus dollars to avoid them. One union speaker led a chant "Bail us out," using the bank and General Motors bailouts to show what the MTA needs. He completely ignored that bailouts led to tens of thousands of autoworkers and homeowners — disproportionably black, Latino and immigrant — losing jobs, wages and property.

PLP organized many students and teachers to march from a protest against education cuts to the rally against transit cuts. From inside and outside the hearing we maintained the need for workers to rely on, and ally with, students and other workers, not on politicians or pro-boss union leaders, the class enemy.



Local 100's message focused on station agents, one of two main titles facing layoffs, as being "first responders to terrorism," hoping to appeal to politicians' "anti-terrorist" platforms. In signs, speeches and flyers, PLP members pointed out that the "war on terror" and transit cuts are different parts of the same war on the international working class and that politicians are leading these attacks.

At one point thousands of workers chanted "Let them in!" when cops blocked students from entering the Local 100 rally.

Police prevented chanting groups from entering the hearings, which moved forward as scheduled with little organized action inside. But more is needed to oppose the bosses.

Self-critically, PLP could have done more to give the bosses a taste of the disruption the latter plan to give transit riders and workers. We know MTA, state and city bosses have already made their decision and want to use hearings and demonstrations to give the illusion of "democracy." But the movement against budget cuts present opportunities.

PLP can unite workers and students in actions that confront the bosses and expose the state as the class dictatorship it really is. Victory means building PLP to raise militancy in the class struggle and organize against capitalism. That's the only way to ensure such demonstrations don't just blow off steam, but serve as a small example of the tremendous class struggle needed to fight and win communist revolution.✪

Transit Workers' Class Unity Backs Students' Free Passes

SAN FRANCISCO, March 29 — Capitalism thrives when the workers think of themselves just as individuals. But when workers view themselves as a class, that the struggles of one person or group are more similar than different from others, and that an attack against one worker is an attack against our class — then the capitalists see this as a potential danger for their class.

Last month transit workers at this city's MUNI Railway joined riders at meetings and a march against fare increases for youth and seniors. Oakland's AC Transit and MUNI drivers also joined forces in March 4 walkouts and rallies with students and teachers fighting education cuts.

Amid one of the biggest service cutbacks in AC Transit history, and with increasing threats of wage and benefit cuts facing workers in the upcoming contract, five drivers in a union caucus joined a campaign for free bus passes for Oakland youth. While AC Transit workers in Amalgamated Transit Union Local 192 are oppressed by killer schedules that stress out and injure many workers, we are not as oppressed as Oakland's public school children and their parents:

- Ninety percent of these youth qualify for the federal free lunch program because their parents' incomes are so low;
- Twenty-six hundred of the city's 38,000 students don't make it to school every day;
- Fifty percent don't graduate from high school; the vast majority are black, Latino and Asian children, making them victims of racist attacks.

PLP views this as a campaign in which workers can sharpen their class consciousness. Transit workers uniting with students and teachers will give us many opportunities. In one meeting's workshop with parents, teachers and transit workers, black, Latino and Asian youth said they had to spend lunch money on bus fare and vice versa.

Once more workers and youth begin to see that capitalism as a system *must* put wars for oil and bailouts of finance capital ahead of the basic needs of workers and youth, we're on the road to developing more communists.

Besides many opportunities in this struggle, there are also risks. It's being organized by Genesis, a church-based organization connected to the Gamaliel Foundation which backed Barack Obama.

On the one hand, Genesis recently organized a multi-racial campaign with BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) and AC Transit workers and community groups to successfully stop a $550 million driverless rail connector from BART to the Oakland Airport; $70 million in stimulus money went back to Bay Area bus and rail operators. Genesis argued that the "Connector" discriminated against workers, especially black and Latino workers.

However, they've asked the liberal, ruling-class-funded San Francisco Foundation for $40,000 to financially support the Free Bus Pass campaign.

The SF and Gamaliel foundations want us to think capitalism can be reformed by lobbying and community pressure. But, in essence, these same forces and their White House buddies are expanding war and fascist oppression worldwide every day.

PLP has a better idea. While growing class consciousness will give the capitalists more trouble carrying out their plans, only communist revolution can eliminate the profit system and its wage slavery that breeds racism, inequality and war. March On May Day! ✪

'Jobs, Not Jails!'

Baltimore Youth Blast School-to-Prison Pipeline

The following is an interview of a friend of PLP about the protests in Baltimore on March 4.

Q. What is the school-to-prison pipeline?

A. School-to-prison pipeline is the need for our youth, especially minorities, to not be able to go to school because the system profits more if they end up in the juvenile justice system.

Q. You took part in the March 4th events in Baltimore. Can you tell us a little about what happened?

A. It was a really inspirational day. We started in downtown Baltimore at Camden Yards where we waited for students to arrive and listened to speeches about the importance of why we were marching. Next we started the march past the state school board building where we met up with more students and let the people inside know we were serious. In the following events, we marched to the juvenile justice center [and] we chanted different things such as "Jobs Not Jails."

Q. What exactly is being demanded, and what did it feel like to be part of that major protest?

A. They are demanding that 100 out of the 300 million dollars that is being allocated for more youth jails be redirected towards education. They are demanding this from the governor because he owes the city money due to a state mandate that has yet to be paid to the youth of Baltimore. I felt like I was doing something important to help students.

Q. Why do you think the cops didn't arrest the people who sat-in and picketed, right inside the Baby Bookings [juvenile jail] complex?

A. I think they didn't arrest anyone who sat-in or picketed because it wouldn't be in their best interest to arrest any of the students or adults. If they did that would cause more media coverage for our cause and it could have caused an uproar from the students.

Q. What is Progressive Labor Party's analysis about why U.S. capitalism, year after year, incarcerates such tremendous numbers of working-class people?

A. The capitalists of America need prison labor to produce products cheap to make a huge profit. Private prison contractors make a lot more money using prisoners to labor for cheap. The capitalist state needs the school-to-prison pipeline. To end it we have to destroy the capitalist state and establish working-class power, which means a dictatorship of the working class.

Q. There was a very good Town Hall meeting last month to help organize for March 4. Can you tell us about Progressive Labor Party's contribution to that event?

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Philly Bosses Are the Real 'Flash Mobsters'

PHILADELPHIA, March 29 — Communists in PLP want a world where our children are collectively nurtured regardless of the color of their skin. Racism is not human nature, but is a creation of capitalism. Racism allows the bosses to make billions in extra profits by paying lower wages to black and Latino workers, dragging down the wages of all workers. Communist revolution will get rid of the capitalist profit system that must use racism.

If that sounds like a far-fetched dream then surely the Nazi-like attacks on black working-class children in Philadelphia can show us how much that "dream" is needed.

Racist banking and real estate policies have caused housing in segregated black working-class areas to degrade until they look like a war zone. Those areas are stripped of food markets, movie theaters and safe and clean playgrounds. Black children in those areas are sent to the worst schools and then the police beat up and arrest those children when they venture out to the city areas supposedly designated for tourists and commerce.

Sounds like South African apartheid, but it's right here in Philadelphia!

There have been four instances here since December of young black students gathering to meet their friends and see what's going on. They use their phones and the internet to pass the word about possible happenings, then arrive and mill around looking for something fun or exciting. The gatherings are called flash mobs because word is quickly spread through Twitter or Facebook or mass texting. This way things are announced very quickly, in a "flash."

There have been a few minor outbreaks of violence as the throngs congregated, but nothing to warrant calling out battalions of cops and helicopters. However, in a city oppressed by financial collapse, foreclosures, stock gyrations and tax declines, the bosses who rule the city are worried that these gatherings of young black students will "scare" away the suburban middle class and harm city tourism.

The Philadelphia Inquirer, the main voice of the local ruling class, warned, "Visitors from the suburbs will surely think twice before coming into Philadelphia for dinner, to shop, spend the night in a hotel, visit a museum, or attend a live show. The same goes for tourists from other states making travel plans this spring or summer. Not to mention organizations planning conventions." (Philadelphia Inquirer 3/23/10)

On March 24th, Philadelphia's black mayor, Michael Nutter, held a press conference flanked by 36 uniformed cops plus his Police Commissioner! His intended message to Philadelphia's ruling class: "Don't be alarmed. Our tourism income is safe from rampaging black children!" Twenty- eight of the arrested children were charged this week with felony riot and were thrown in jail.

The mother of one jailed youth was herself arrested for protesting her son's jail sentence. "Lock me up," Theresa Guyton demanded. 'That's my baby,' she yelled …The defendant's attorney told the judge that the family has been in and out of homeless shelters and that the teen often has to care for his younger siblings. 'That's the problem. That's why you are here,' the judge said to the weeping teen. 'Your mother thinks of you as the man of the house…'" (Philadelphia Daily News 3/24/10)

Does this sound like racist scapegoating? It should! That judge and the capitalist system he represents are the REAL problem. The capitalists are the real mobsters destroying things!

Capitalism has left Philadelphia with few jobs and high unemployment (officially 10.6%). Slashed state and federal assistance has led to crumbling schools and infrastructure, declining population, severe poverty and nightly murders in the streets. The bosses' response is to blame young black people who have few alternatives to the spontaneous get-togethers.

Decades ago the struggles against U.S. and South African racism involved and inspired millions. But because those fights did not have the ultimate goal of overthrowing capitalism for a classless society, racism continues to be murderous. We must respond to this racist attack on black working-class youth on our jobs, in our unions, communities, churches and schools. But this time our fight must have the goal of eliminating racism by overthrowing capitalism with communist revolution. ✪

General Strikers Shut Greece, Beat the Hell Out of Cops, Union Hacks

ATHENS, March 29 — The class struggle is raging in Greece, and the working class is beginning to advance against the bosses' cutbacks. The working class shut Greece down on Thursday, March 11, for the second time in less than a month (see CHALLENGE 3/17). Planes didn't fly, factories and schools were closed and the Corinth Canal was shut down. TV, Radio, electronic news websites, and the press — the whole country was brought to a standstill. Over 100,000 workers marched, possibly the largest demonstration in 15 years. Some factories that did try to stay open were forcibly shut down by protesters and striking workers, with many scabs being stopped from entering.

Earlier in the week, the striking workers attempted to storm parliament. When one of the major union leaders tried to stop them, they beat the snot out of him. It's inspiring to see the bosses' dogs get stomped. A few days later, the union put up wanted posters of the workers who beat him up, echoing one of the Nazi's favorite tactics.

During an event organized by the Ministry of Education, teachers invaded the conference room while the Minister of Education was speaking. The teachers unfolded a big banner against the measures and chanted slogans against the regime. When a plain-clothes policeman tried to stop them, the teachers surrounded the man, disarmed him, and beat him, culminating with the man crawling on the floor towards the exit. The teachers then continued to chant slogans against the Minister.

Greece is suffering from massive budget cuts being inflicted upon it by the international capitalist class — the bosses. The Socialist government is crying that they must inflict these cuts on the working class and that it's out of their hands. These bootlickers are not saying that capitalism cannot meet the needs of the working class. They can't, because they are not against capitalism. They want to control it so that they can continue to sell out the working class for their capitalist masters. Socialists will always betray the working class because they don't fight directly for communism, even if they pay lip service to wanting to fight for it at all.

The communist movement in Greece has been diverted down two dead-ends: anarchism and socialism. The socialist parties, many of whom call themselves "communist," are saturated with false ideas that capitalism can be reformed. The anarchists are saturated with the false idea that communism can be achieved without a centralized party apparatus to organize the revolution and society. The anarchists led attacks on police stations, luxury shops, representations of wealth, banks, and the police themselves, and leftists did lead the one-day strike, but it will not be enough to stop the socialist PASOK government from instituting the cuts that the capitalist bosses need.

It is amazing to see the photos of brave workers fighting against the cops. A favorite chant is "Cops are not children of the working class, they are dogs of the capitalists." It is exciting to see class consciousness inspire the strikes. It should inspire us all to step up our attacks on the capitalist state as they continue to attack us.

Examples of Greek students being attacked by cops on motorcycles trying to encircle them, and then encircling the cops, smashing their motorcycles and sending over 15 of them to the hospital after they beat them up, should inspire us to not fear the state and its armed apparatus. When the working class faces increasing repression, they begin to resist the new social order that the rulers try to impose. But, without communist leadership, that resistance will be co-opted into narrow reform movements and one-day strikes.

It will take a lot more than a one-day strike to stop the capitalists from trying to preserve their profit rate on the backs of the working class, both in Greece and internationally. The same enemy is attacking workers in Haiti with hundreds of thousands dead, and soldiers walking around with weapons instead of food. The same enemy is attacking the workers in Afghanistan with radioactive weaponry and paying for the war by cutting services and education of students from New York City to Los Angeles.

If workers around the world shared the Greek workers' anger and class consciousness the rulers would be shaking in their shoes. However, we know that anger, militant action and reform demands are not enough to change the system to meet the needs of the working class. We need communist leadership from the PLP to make a revolution to wrest state power from the capitalists. ✪

Palestine: Strikers' Solidarity Bucks Bosses At Every Turn

YERUCHAM, ISRAEL, March 25 — Late last year, workers at the Ackerstein factory — one of Israel's largest construction material manufacturers — in this southern town decided to stand up and fight their boss's terror by establishing a democratic and independent union. Their struggle culminated in a strike and occupation of the factory, demanding union recognition and a union contract. Yerucham is located in Israel's "deep south," where most residents are low-wage Jewish workers, as well as super-exploited Bedouins. Their multi-racial unity carried the day.

The spark igniting this conflict was management's firing of some of the most veteran skilled workers, to increase profits. Their fellow workers felt this was totally unjust, especially since this group of workers was highly committed to the job and to their friends in the factory. This occurred amid the impoverishment and unemployment prevailing here, especially among veteran workers.

Fifteen years ago, Ackerstein workers tried to unionize as part of the state-run, phony pro-employers Histadrut union federation. But local Histadrut officials gave the organizers' names to the bosses who then threatened to fire them if they continued to build the union. Even though Histadrut didn't unionize the workers, they charged them membership dues.

The management forced the workers to sign an illegal contract, pledging them to avoid future unionizing attempts. The bosses blacklisted workers who led the unionizing.

The threats and terror didn't change the ugly horrors inside the factory. The management even attempted to create a fake mask of Wallmart-style patronizing "family harmonious relations of production" between the bosses and the workers.

Beside the low wages, workplace insecurity, lack of collective bargaining and pensions, there is a critical problem of unhealthy exposure to dust and toxic chemicals which can cause cancer and respiratory diseases. The bosses refuse to recognize the dangerous health risks, denying appropriate protection for the workers.

Then the bosses forced the workers to sign another draconian and illegal contract, stating that if they became ill because of the factory's health risks, they would not file claims against the company because they "were aware of the job's risks."

Due to the management threats and terror, workers began unionizing secretly. Now, almost all the workers joined. The workers also decided democratically to affiliate their union to the new, more democratic "Workers' Power" federation.

Ackerstein refused to recognize the union. Initially, they tried to fire the union's leading members. This failed because of the workers' solidarity. They then went on a short strike. Soon afterwards, management tried another divide-and-conquer tactic, but workers' unity defeated that.

Throughout this period, the local union and the Workers' Power federation offered to start negotiating a contract, but the boss refused to bargain.

The bosses then brought in scabs. They also began removing the machines, threatening to move the assembly lines to Eastern Europe, or even to close the entire factory.

Those threats failed to break the workers' spirit. It only increased their motivation and militancy in defense of their union. They answered the bosses' brutality by occupying the factory. Soon the boss changed his attitude and seemed more willing to negotiate. The solidarity from unions in neighboring factories in the industrial zone and from the working-class community of Yerucham also helped the workers to stand together in their struggle.

The successful strike forced the local court of labor affairs to recognize the union's legitimacy and demanded management start negotiating. But management is now collaborating with Histadrut to unionize the company's other facilities into its fake sellout unions. They intend to isolate the southern factory's workers from the rest of the company's work-force and install the pro-state, pro-boss Histadrut as the "official" union.

This struggle has shown how powerful the workers can be when they refuse to back down when faced with the capitalist's attempts at coercion. But even though this was a local victory for the workers, in the long run even a strong union can't change the ugly face of capitalism, a system based on the exploitation of workers by the ruling class. In order to guarantee the working class a decent life, occupying a factory and scaring the boss for a few hours unfortunately is not enough. We need to smash the bosses and their system once and for all, and win state power under the banner of revolutionary communism! ✪

800,000 Workers Rally, Strike Across France



PARIS, March 24 — Up to 800,000 workers demonstrated in 180 rallies across France yesterday, fighting mass layoffs and demanding jobs, higher wages and hands off retirement pensions. Workers also struck the railroads, postal service, hospitals and schools. Virtually half of all public school teachers walked out. As French rulers and their Sarkozy government try to tighten the screws on the workers' social welfare programs, it appears the working class's fighting spirit is growing. This year's May Day marches could be massive if workers refuse to follow the union hacks into another dead-end.

LETTERS

Class Analysis Links Ancient Rome to U.S. Now

I am a first-year NYC public school teacher. It becomes more clear to me daily that the education system is set up to make a certain large group of students fail, in order to keep the rulers' system of exploitation viable. I do not know how so many great teachers survive in schools without a class analysis to explain why there are so many kids below the level they should be at. As a member of PLP, I feel that it is my job not only to try and expose students to communist ideas and recruit them to the Party, but also to give them the skills and knowledge they should have.

I teach Humanities and recently finished a unit on the Roman Empire. Because my students are at so many different levels, I try to use different materials and media in the classroom. For this unit, I spent some time teaching them about the Punic Wars and the Roman expansion.

The first film clip briefly showed the war in Carthage, and how Roman soldiers completely wiped out a town, stole all their valuables and enslaved the survivors. After the battle, we see the army return to Rome, where the plebeians (95% of the population) lived in misery. We then see a discussion between members of the Senate and the army's generals. The Senators warn the generals that they need a new enemy for the plebeians to fear so they will stand up and support the "great" Roman Republic.

In Rome, not only did the rich create enemies out of people they wanted to conquer, they used disgusting tactics to keep the plebeians "occupied" or disillusioned about their power as a class. The coliseum was a prime example of this as up to 200,000, rich and poor, watched gladiators (slaves) fight to the death.

The rise of Christianity kept masses passive then and continues to do so today, along with other world religions. This same type of media and entertainment exists today and keeps millions of workers "occupied" and ignorant about who the real enemy is.

After watching the movie clip, my class had a great discussion about the similarities between the ruling class in the Roman Empire and the ruling class that exists today. Although, I am part of the system and unfortunately have to teach my students to the Regents exam, I always try to teach using a class analysis. Also, I always try to remind them and myself that the working class has the power to change the world and put power into our hands.

The Roman Empire fell, the U.S. and the other empires today will fall. That is why we need to bring communist ideas to the masses, so that we don't replace one empire with another. Let's break the vicious deadly cycle of class society.

NYC Teacher

Hospital Speed-up Helps MRSA Spread

The "Red Eye On The News" item "Antibiotics= farm profit; people die" hits me personally.

I have a MRSA infection that undermined a major surgery last year and forced me to retire from my job. The memory of standing in my shower and watching the six-inch surgical incision in my abdomen open up like a scene from the movie "Alien" still haunts me. The medications I take daily have side effects like diarrhea — truly a pain in the ass!

Farm antibiotics are not the only contributor to MRSA infections however. Short staffing and speed-up in the capitalist healthcare industry is a primary cause. Simply, if a healthcare worker is rushing from patient to patient or room to room, they are more likely to not practice the effective hand-washing which can prevent the spread of infection. Healthcare custodial workers moreover, should allow disinfectant to sit on surfaces from 5 to 15 minutes so the disinfectant may penetrate the layers of bacteria. After working 25 years in a major hospital's housekeeping department I can tell you, ain't no supervisor allowing any housekeeper to let anything sit 15 minutes without a fight!

I've spent years of being a union delegate and sitting on several contract negotiating committees fighting for more staffing to improve patient care and combat racist unemployment. Several times we actually won some jobs. But as U.S. fascism deepens with the increase of imperialist rivalries and wars, U.S. bosses have even less leeway to allow reform victories like more staffing.

The inadequate staffing of healthcare under capitalism guarantees the continued spread of MRSA and another killer infection, Clostridium Difficile or C-Diff as it's known. Our PL club was correct to make the need for communism primary in all those reform struggles over the years. Communist revolution is truly the only lasting cure for infections like MRSA and C-Diff.

A Comrade

CHALLENGE-DESAFIO A Hit At Immigrants' March

On March 21, over 200,000 people — Latino, black, Asian, white — from countries all over the world turned out to support immigrant reform. Millions of dollars were spent by Catholic churches and government agencies for free buses to guarantee a big turnout. On the buses, people were handed papers stating that police have every right to stop you if they have a "good reason to believe that you are involved in criminal activity." If you are searched, you are to say clearly "I do not consent," but to always be polite, respectful and calm.

As we were gathered on the mall and handed little U.S. flags, one of the first speakers talked about Jose Sucuzhanay, the Ecuadorian immigrant whose murderers are still free because the intent of their motive has not been judged a hate crime.

While most people who attended had illusions that reform would bring better conditions, the video of Obama continued the theme that the rights of immigrants were second to the demands of a capitalist system, "effective strategies to protect our borders and enforce the law while offering a path to citizenship for hardworking people who register, pay taxes, pay a fine, and agree to play by the rules." Reforms were promised by every speaker, but none went further than the Dream Act that offers two roads to citizenship: college or the army.

One CHALLENGE-DESAFIO seller opened the paper to show the fight backs against education cuts in colleges across the country and how, with the cuts, classes were dropped, summer school eliminated and teachers laid off. With tuition hikes every year, the only future open to most youth was certainly the army, Afghanistan or Iraq. Many of the families who were shown CHALLENGE-DESAFIO had come with two or three young children to the rally. Their faces showed quick understanding of these issues as they saw the article about the liberal mask of CIR and bought a copy. Over a hundred papers were easily sold within a few hours.

New Jersey comrade

Palestine: Communism Only Answer to Refugees' Plight

During the 1948 war, the racist Israeli bosses forced 750,000 Palestinians to leave their homes which were confiscated, along with their land. Mostly workers and peasants, they were forced to become refugees, many in refugee camps.

Today these refugees and their descendants, totaling 4,618,141, live in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Of them, 1,373,732 are trapped in refugee camps in horrible living conditions, super-exploited by the local Arab bosses, and suffering from substandard housing and infrastructure and huge unemployment rates.

These villagers' Right to Return to their pre-1948 lands is a basic right, the right to live where their families had lived for generations. However, even worse is their plight in these refugee camps, which capitalism has caused and maintains.

The Israeli ruling class does its utmost to prevent these refugees from returning to their lands, stolen from them by the Israeli state and used to enrich local and foreign capitalists. The Palestinian nationalist leaders pay lip-service to the Right of Return, but cannot solve — and in fact contribute to — the basic hardships faced by these refugees.

However, even if some of them were allowed to return to their lands, under capitalism their suffering will continue. Their villages have been ruined for sixty years. On many of them the Zionists established "Jewish Only" settlements. The capitalists will have no interest in ending their impoverishment with adequate and affordable housing, education, healthcare and infrastructure, or with jobs that can provide a decent living. In fact, if the refugees will ever return to Israel-Palestine while capitalism still reigns, their current refugee camps will simply be replaced by new ones there, and they will become nothing but a source of cheap labor for the Palestinian and/or Israeli bosses.

Only communism — a society run by the workers under the principle of "to each according to need, from each according to commitment" — can provide a real solution to the plight of Palestine's refugees. A communist-run workers' state will be able to satisfy their needs, wherever they live, enabling them to contribute to the construction of communist progress in the entire Middle East in particular, as well as in the world in general.

A communist in Israel/Palestine

School-to-Prison Pipeline Interview

continued from p. 4

A. During the open discussion period of the meeting a comrade took a firm position that the school-to-prison pipeline was wrong and that the only solution is a communist revolution. Then the people on the panel at the Town Hall meeting were asked what they thought of revolution. It caused the audience to begin to cheer for our comrade and showed that we aren't the only ones here to believe in revolution.

Q. On March 4 itself, how many people helped distribute PLP's communist newspaper, CHALLENGE, and about how many participants took copies of the paper?

A. On March 4 there were three people passing out CHALLENGE and we got out close to a hundred papers and made a couple of new friends of the Party.

Q. Last year, only 4,285 students graduated from public high schools in Baltimore City, but a larger number — about 6,000 young people — were arrested by the police. How do you think we can solve this problem?

A. As I discussed above the only solution would be a communist revolution. We should start with a class-consciousness that would help these students learn that the bosses need these numbers to keep their families and minorities as a whole oppressed. ✪

UAW Patriotism Betrays GM Workers in Plant Closing

FREEMONT, CA, February 26 — "TOYOTA BETRAYS AMERICAN WORKERS," screams the glossy, very expensive flier being distributed at the U.S. Auto Show. "Help save 50,000 American jobs," is what those leafleting are instructed to tell those entering the auto show. This red, white and blue nonsense is what passes for a UAW campaign to "save" the NUMMI assembly plant that is scheduled to close on March 31, tossing 4,500 workers and their families into the street.

NUMMI was a joint venture between GM and Toyota, formed almost 30 years ago and is Toyota's only unionized plant in North America. During the recent GM bankruptcy, ordered and plotted by the Obama administration, GM pulled out of NUMMI and any contractual obligations, leaving it to Toyota to close the plant.



The plant closing will also affect over 40,000 workers who either work in supplier plants or other related jobs, from small businesses selling work boots and work gloves to bars and restaurants, to companies that clean the factory and many more. NUMMI is very productive and profitable, with maybe the largest workforce of any assembly plant in North America, and sells two-thirds of what it produces in California.

But even that is not enough. More money can be made by moving the work to non-union plants in Canada, San Antonio, Texas and Mexico. In these factories, the "Toyota" workers do the final assembly and make up about one-third of the workforce. The rest are sub-contractors that assemble doors, dashboards and other components, and make about one-third of what the Toyota workers make. The newly refurbished Jeep plant in Toledo, OH now runs the same way, with a UAW contract.

The UAW "SAVE NUMMI" campaign is a patriotic fraud to turn workers' anger and public opinion against Toyota and away from GM. It's a repeat of the racist campaigns of the 1970's that led to the racist murder of Vincent Chin, a Chinese student in Detroit, beaten to death by two Chrysler workers because they thought he was Japanese. Nowhere does the UAW hold GM responsible. In fact, while the Auto Show was in Chicago, the UAW staging area was the plush Drake Hotel, on the Gold Coast. This also happened to be where all the GM execs were staying.

At the very least, these workers were under UAW contracts and should have been offered the same buyouts, severance packages and bumping rights as thousands of other GM workers. Recently a fight broke out at a packed UAW Local 2244 meeting over this issue. Many workers know the campaign is a fraud and want GM to settle up with them. The UAW leadership is focusing on "saving" NUMMI, to get GM off the hook. No one in Solidarity House (UAW international headquarters in Detroit) believes the plant can be saved, because they are not willing to shut the whole industry down to save it!

And how could they? After helping GM, Ford and Chrysler close dozens of plants and eliminate hundreds of thousands of jobs, after cutting the pay of Detroit 3, Delphi, American Axle and others to $12/hr., after helping turn Detroit into a ghetto victimized by 50% racist unemployment, after losing two-thirds of its members and representing less than half of the domestic auto industry, the UAW leadership couldn't fight the bosses if they wanted to. And they don't want to.

The Toyota workers who wrote in the last issue of CHALLENGE, and UAW members facing endless threats to their jobs and living standards, will unite across company and international borders, because the times demand it and because PLP is committed to making it happen. And we will fight to turn every attack and plant closing into a struggle to win our coworkers to abolish wage slavery with commnist revolution. ✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Cops harass by 'race' and class

NYT, 3/13 — New York City....cops are making more than a half-million of these stops every year. A vast majority of the people targeted — close to 90 percent — are completely innocent....

If they've shown their identification to the cops or answered any questions,...a permanent record of the encounter...is promptly entered into the department's staggeringly huge computerized files. Why the Police Department should be keeping files on innocent people is a question with no legitimate answer. This is Big Brother in Blue....

Blacks and Hispanics, and especially those who are young and those who are poor, are disproportionately singled-out for this peculiar form of police harassment....

The overwhelming majority of the stops yield no law-enforcement benefit whatsoever....

The reasons given by the cops for deciding which unfortunate New Yorkers will be stopped are beyond bogus. A "furtive movement" is the most popular....

The truth — and many cops will tell you this privately — is that the stops are made first and the justification is dreamed up later.

Capitalism kills morality in Poland

NYT, 3/16 — Warsaw — They loiter at the mall for hours, young teenage girls selling their bodies in return for designer jeans, Nokia cellphones, even a pair of socks.

Katarzyna Roslaniec, a young filmaker....scribbled their secrets in her notepad....

The result is the darkly devastating fictional film, "Galerianki," or Mall Girls, which premiered in Poland in the autumn and has provoked a national debate about moral decadence in this conservative, predominantly Catholic country, 20 years after the fall of... [the Berlin Wall].

Ms. Roslaniec called mall girls the daughters of capitalism. "Parents have lost themselves in the race after a new washing machine or car and are rarely home," she said. "A 14-year-old girl needs a system of values.... these girls live in a world where there are no feelings....

"....All this would have been unimaginable during Communism."

Iran nukes? Criminal! Israel? Hmm...

GW, 3/12 — Droning on about the dangers of a nuclear Iran, Clinton in Qater appeared to treat her Arab interlocutors as though they were children, but most children above a certain age in the Middle East know about the blatant contradiction in US policy of punishing Iran while mollycoddling the only country with undeclared nuclear weapons in the region [Israel].

'The Making of African America'

NYT, 3/21 — What sets the African-American story apart is the terrible strain of oppression that runs through it. Other groups suffered from discrimination, of course. But nothing comes close to matching the ferocity of racism....

Mr. Berlin brilliantly evokes the horrors of.... the rise of systematic segregation in the late-19th-century South as it stangled the promise of independence and equality that Emancipation had created. He traces...the creation of a segregated North in...the way that employers pushed African-American workers into the lowest-paying, most dangerous jobs they had to offer; the way that real estate agents, bankers, insurance agents and white homeowners restricted black migrants to the most dilapidated neighborhods, hemming them into the ghettos many of them would never escape.... Profound inequalities..continue to plague African-American communities — poverty, segregation, incarceration — despite the obvious triumphs of the last 40 years....

Not that Berlin sees victimization as the main theme of black history. "The Making of African America" is primarily a story of the resilience, creativity, and courage African-Americans drew upon as they engaged in the difficult process of piecing together their new lives....



Recession will hurt a generation

NYT, 3/20 — A story that is not getting nearly enough attention is the ruinous fiscal meltdown occurring in state after state, all across the country.

Taxes are being raised. Draconian cuts in services are being made. Public employees are being fired....The sick, the elderly, the young and the poor — are getting badly hurt....

For all the happy talk about "no child left behind," the truth is that in Arizona and New Jersey and dozens of other states trying to cope with the fiscal disaster brought on by the Great Recession, millions of children are being left far behind, and many millions of adults as well....

California has cut billions of dollars from its education system....

In the first few months of this year, state and local governments across the U.S. cut 45,000 jobs. Additional layoffs are expected....

"What we're seeing now in Arizona and New Jersey and other states spells long-term trouble for the nation's children....

"We are seeing the emergence of what amounts to a 'recession generation....'"

Those that rely...heavily on cuts are making guaranteed investments in human misery.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Japan: Youth Shift to Left Needs Real Red Leadership

The capitalist crisis that hit Japan in the early 1990's has sharply increased unemployment and homelessness, forcing many workers into "Capsule Hotels." The deepening global financial crisis has worsened this situation, leading to a staggering 25% unemployment rate, but also to an emerging fight-back by workers, teachers and students. In a country once boasting to be the stronghold of economic equality, now over one-third of Japan's workers are hired on "flexible" and temporary contracts. Over 200,000 have been laid off since October 2008.

Immigrant workers from Southeast Asia, China and Latin America are employed in super-exploitative factory jobs originally held by unionized Japanese workers making a "liveable" wage. The fascist right-wing uses this in their sharply increasing racist attack on immigrant workers.

"Contingent" (temporary) labor is a reality for young workers. High rents and short jobless periods throw workers on the streets. An unknown number now survive for varying periods by sleeping in internet cafe cubicles, costing a fraction of what even a cramped one-room apartment would run.

Those who are poorer still, both homeless and jobless, barely exist in "cardboard cities" of major towns and often are subjected to vicious police attacks during round-ups and evictions. The rising phenomenon "Karoshi," or death from overwork, is common at capitalist giants like Hitachi. Many workers must work up to 80 hours a week to keep their jobs.

The newly-elected liberal Yukio Hatoyama government of the Democratic Party of Japan has vowed to "solve" the crisis by "fighting corruption" and reorganizing Japan's geo-political position, namely its relationship with China and the U.S. Hatoyama has promised to end the decade-long recession, to focus on reformist policies that benefit public need over corporate interest, and to redefine Japan's relationship to what Hatoyama calls "U.S.-led globalization."

Yet it's clear that Hatoyama, who comes from one of Japan's wealthiest families (dubbed the "Japanese Kennedys") is using the rhetoric of change to mask ruling-class interest in disciplining the rogue capitalists, to smooth out the rough spots so that profit accumulation won't stagger. While not a military power, Japanese finance capital is central to the inter-imperialist rivalry between the U.S. and China, both in technological advancement and capital re-investment.

Recent articles in the NY Times and Asian Times Online reveal that Japan is closely aligning with China. Hatoyama's government is also urging the U.S. to move its massive military base in Okinawa. Hatoyama's hope of remaining neutral within inter-imperialist competition is unsustainable and will likely lead to Japan's realignment with either the U.S. or China, both economically and militarily, squeezing unemployed young workers in the middle of the bosses' battle for global economic control.

Workers and students have not stood idly by while corrupt Japanese rulers have run the country into the ground. In the early 2000s, militant unions like the National Railways Union, with over 200,000 workers, have led demonstrations against railway privatization. The rank and file, some with links to the reformist Japanese Revolutionary "Communist" League (formed in the 1960's), have also led strikes against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They especially criticized Japan's involvement in refuelling U.S. warships anchored in the Indian Ocean for deployment in the inter-imperialist confrontation in Afghanistan.

Tokyo's teachers have been resisting Japan's re-militarization that began after 9/11, forcing many into a battle with the racist and openly sexist Mayor Ishihara Shintaro who controls the Education Ministry with an iron fist. These teachers have also joined demonstrations opposing Japanese involvement in Afghanistan and have played a key role in curbing the ultra-nationalism emerging in the post-9/11 period.

Students at Keio University have rebuilt some of the militant organizations of the 1960's, which led massive demonstrations against the Vietnam War in 1968, and have protested discriminatory university policies.

Without communist leadership, however, many young workers have turned to the Japanese "Communist" Party which has gained 14,000 members since 2008; one-fourth of these new members are under 18. This generation grew up without having experienced the relative stability existing in Japan during the post-war "boom" and has suffered hard conditions, instilling second thoughts in young workers about their relationship to the profit-driven system of exploitation and wage-slavery.

The increasing presence of worker-led street rallies has galvanized the surge in communist sympathy, benefitting the JCP in its attempt to rebuild its base in mainstream political circles. The JCP claims well over 400,000 members in 25,000 local branches, making it one of the largest "communist" parties of the industrialized countries.

While this trend indicates a seemingly leftward shift amongst Japanese youth, the resurgent JCP doesn't offer revolutionary change, favoring instead "pragmatic" solutions to the present crisis and the "peaceful transition to socialism" without destroying capitalism. Some attempts are being made to establish a base of workers and students in Japan who ignore the false hopes of Hatoyama and JCP reformism, to turn the recent fight-back into a school for communist revolution. ✪



CAPITALISM BREEDS SEXISM RACISM & IMPERIALISM!



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